

# SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING FOR AN ARTIST

## Using Engagement to Build a Loyal Fan Base

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<p>Tiivistelmä</p> <p>Toiminnallisen opinnäytetyön tavoitteena oli välittää käytännöllisen kuvauksen siitä kuinka artisti voi kehittää parempaa näkyvyyttä sosiaalisessa mediassa. Erityispaino on artistin ja fanien välisessä vuorovaikutuksessa ja heidän sitouttamisessa prosessin aikana. Tapauksena toimi nosteessa oleva brittiläinen laulaja-lauluntekijä Franco and the Dreadnought, jonka kanssa sosiaalisen median aktiviteettejä ja markkinointikampanjoita oli suunniteltu, toteutettu ja hallinnoitu.</p> <p>Sosiaalisen median nousu ja sen keskeinen osa – sosiaalinen verkkopalvelu eivät ole ainoastaan muuttaneet vuorovaikutustapoja, mutta myös se miten artistia markkinoidaan ja promotoidaan verkossa. Musiikkimarkkinoinnin laajentuneita tapoja ovat lähentäneet artistia ja faneja, joka on tehnyt näiden kahden ryhmien välistä suhdetta henkilökohtaisemmaksi kuin koskaan aiemmin.</p> <p>Opinnäytetyö kuvaa tämänkaltaisen tilanteen hyötyjä artistin näkökulmasta. Se selittää lukuisten sosiaalisen median asiantuntijoiden teorioita ja niistä syntyneiden ideoiden toteuttamista projektin aikana, sekä analysoi niiden toteutusta ja tuloksia. Toiminnan pääalueina olivat sosiaaliset verkkopalvelut Facebook ja Twitter.</p> <p>Opinnäytetyö on tapaustutkimus artistin sosiaalisen median näkyvyyden tehostamisesta ja musiikin markkinoimisesta fanien sitouttamisen avulla. Se tarjoaa katsauksen huomio-otettavista näkökulmista, haasteista ja mahdollisuuksista sosiaalisessa mediassa kampanjoissa. Sen lisäksi se sisällyttää perinteisempiä markkinointitapoja osoittaakseen, että sosiaalisen median vaikutusvallasta huolimatta, se ei saa olla ainoa markkinointistrategia.</p>		
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<p>Abstract</p> <p>The objective of the project thesis was to provide a practical insight on how an artist can create a better online presence. Specifically it aimed to emphasize the importance of fan interaction and engagement throughout the process. The British up-and-coming singer-songwriter Franco and the Dreadnought acted as the case with whom social media activities and marketing campaigns were planned, carried out and managed.</p> <p>The rise of social media and its integral part - social networking - have not only changed the way of interaction, but also how an artist is marketed and promoted online. The expanded ways of music marketing have brought an artist closer to their fans, which has made their relationship more personal than ever before.</p> <p>The thesis discusses the benefits of this type of a situation from the artist's point of view. It explains the various social media experts' theories and ideas put into practice during the project, as well as analyses of their implementation and outcomes. The two main social networking platforms used were Facebook and Twitter.</p> <p>The project thesis was a case study about strengthening an artist's online presence and marketing music with the engagement of fans. As a conclusion it reveals the various aspects to be taken into consideration and the challenges and opportunities when implementing a campaign through social media. Furthermore, it incorporates traditional marketing means to demonstrate that social media must not be the only part of a marketing strategy despite its omnipresent status.</p>		
Keywords Social media, marketing, artist promotion, fan engagement		
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## 1. INTRODUCTION

“Social media marketing is more than just a buzzword. It’s a way of life and a means of survival in today’s Internet lifestyle”. (Weinberg 2009, 15). Social media has not only changed the way people interact with each other, but also how artists promote their music by taking advantage of social media’s offer in creating dialogues, and closer relationships with their fans.

The thesis aimed to provide a practical insight on how to improve an artist’s online presence on their social media pages, which in this case were in Facebook and Twitter. Social media marketing campaigns were planned and executed, their results compared to the goals set and analyzed in terms of what was done right and what could have been done better. In addition, the thesis aimed to emphasize the importance of fan interaction and engagement.

During my internship with the London- based record production and artist management company, The Animal Farm, my main task was to maintain the company’s social media pages. Through this I developed an interest towards social media and decided to continue the path for my thesis. It was important for me to gain more practical experience and knowledge for future references, thus the reason of conducting a case study. I preferred to work with one of the company’s bands, as I became familiar with them over the six-month-period of working there, although I knew that working overseas could prove to be difficult. However, in the hope of decreasing miscommunication, I requested my boss to assign me a solo artist rather than a band. For this the Manchester- based singer-songwriter Franco and The Dreadnought agreed to act as the case.

Franco and The Dreadnought’s main goal was to reach 1000 fans on his Facebook page by the end of this project. To accomplish this, we set rules on how to deal with his online presence, which were to be followed on a regular basis. These rules were based on social media experts’ advice and the type of relationship Franco and The Dreadnought wanted to have with his fans online. A personal objective of mine was to succeed in creating a better online

presence for the artist, which he then would be able to follow through by himself even after the project was over. An other objective was to plan creative and ambitious marketing campaigns for the artist and carry them out in a successful manner.

## **2. THEORETICAL FOUNDATION**

As the thesis was project- based, a significant amount of work concentrated on the practical activities done with the assigned artist. Thus, a comprehensive study on the key terms, which are marketing, artist promotion, social media and fan engagement were not discussed. Yet, a theoretical background had to be established in order to give insight to the context of the project's topic, and to justify the reasoning for certain decisions made for the artist's marketing campaigns.

### **2.1 Marketing**

Marketing is defined in many ways. The American Marketing Association (2007) explains the term as “the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large”. Meldrum and McDonald (2007, 4) describe marketing as ‘the way in which an organization matches its human, financial and physical resources with the wants and needs of its customers.’. A simple definition is given by Kotler and Armstrong (2010, 8), who state that “marketing is managing profitable customer relationships”.

The definitions above show how marketing can be defined not only in complicated ways, which would require additional reading for the reader to fully understand it, but also in simple ways, which can give the reader an idea of the definition's core. Although Kotler and Armstrong's way of expressing marketing was less detailed, it proved to be the most appropriate one in the context of the project, because it could be understood better in connection to social media theory, as explained later.

### 2.1.1 Marketing Principles for Artist Promotion

Regarding the music industry, Baker (2007) divides music marketing into three steps; creating awareness, making connections and asking for the sale. These elements provided a perfect core for the marketing base, which was used within the project. However, as simple as Baker's definition for music marketing is, Rutter (2011) compares music marketing to the marketing of any commodity, the success of which ultimately depends on the consumer's reaction. He further explains; "selling music products or performances has proven that there is no secret formula for success; other businesses that sell products also need to find their niche consumer, and music is no different in this respect". (152.)

Before talking about marketing principles for music promotion, the difference between marketing and promotion needs to be defined. Lately the line between the two has become blurred. According to Rothamel (2012) "most people use these terms interchangeably to describe a variety of different activities. That would be a mistake. It is especially a mistake in the music business, when different goals require different mixes of marketing and promotion". In a marketing plan the appropriateness, which includes, for example, the target markets and values of the product, is in focus. Moreover, it should then focus on how the product is priced in the market, where it is sold and, finally, how it is *promoted* (White, 2011). In this marketing mix, the key difference between the terms is that promotion is part of the overall marketing. Therefore, marketing exists without promotion, but not the other way around. (Simmonds, 2011).

The easiest and the most appropriate explanation is given by Rothamel (2012), who thinks that "[...] promotion answers the question *what*, marketing answers the question *why*. When you are promoting something, you are merely telling people that it exists. You are telling them *what*. When you are marketing something, you are showing people its value. You are telling them *why*". Especially on the Internet, which is full of artists wanting people's attention, Rothamel further continues with a highly honest opinion "[...] promotion is critical to executing a successful marketing strategy. The issue, however, is that some people make the mistake of thinking that promotion can stand alone. It

can't. If you do promotion by itself, you're really just yelling at people, and likely annoying them to death." As a result, people will not go to the stores to buy music, because it is now available- they need to know the reason *why* they should buy it.

According to Hutchison (2008), marketing an artist needs a marketing plan consisting of several elements and goals which dictates the relativity of each element. Most important, though, is to know what resources are available for a certain artist. For example, those with limited resources should concentrate on developing a market in their geographical area, when an international star should focus on a wide distribution. (31.) As the artist used for this project had limited resources, an applicable advice, which needed to be kept in mind, was given by Summers (2004), according to whom "publicity is all about getting your name out there- it doesn't have to be Spin, Hit Parader, or Rolling Stone. Figure out what kinds of local newspapers and magazines you can get into without worrying so much about who's reading it, because in reality any press is good press". (194.) Of course, exceptions need to be thought of as well. For instance, if the artist represents folk music, it would be a waste of resources to be contacting dance music magazines.

When promoting an artist, all of the artist's artistic appeal needs to be found and then it should be decided how to promote it in order to sell it to the consumers. The strengths of the artist should be used to add dimensions to their persona and commercial appeal. (Allen 2011, 37).

The next crucial aspect of marketing is finding and becoming familiar with the artist's target market. On the very basic level, markets can be divided into three sections, which are fans and current users, potential fans and users and those who are not part of the target market. In the music industry the third group can be considered to be people who do not care for the genre that the artist represents. (Hutchison 2008, 147). A more detailed definition for a target market is given by Allen (2011, 70), who states that the consumers and potential consumers are "with whom the artist's music connects creatively and



commercially, and they are the fans who have the willingness and means to buy music, tickets, merchandise, and related ancillary products from the artist”.

Furthermore, it is highly important to remember that not only does the artist need to compete for the target market’s attention, but also for the target markets of competitive artists. Any artist must be positioned in the marketplace in a way that consumers do not confuse one with another. This is the result of discussions between the artist’s manager and everyone who will be part of selling the artist’s music. The people responsible will answer questions such as who the artist is, to whom they appeal and what needs to be done to find their target market. (Summers 2004, 185.)

### **2.1.2 Music Marketing on the Internet**

Despite the fact that the Internet gives new opportunities for artists to distribute their music on a global scale, it must not be the entire marketing strategy working as a substitute for the traditional promotion. The two should work together, creating a more balanced and effective overall impact on the target market. (Hutchinson 2008, 164.) Other components, which need to be incorporated along with Internet marketing are, publicity (exposure in the mass media that is not advertising, for example press releases and feature stories), radio promotion, music videos, grassroots marketing (also known as guerrilla or street marketing, which means using nontraditional straight-forward marketing tools to awaken an interest in the consumer on a level that encourages them to spread the word), touring and special products (for instance, selling a limited edition of an album). These are the traditional ways record labels have been using to gain awareness for the artist. However, with the fast development of technology and the change of people’s consuming habits, it is important to pick the most suitable ways of reaching out to the target market with particular marketing campaigns. (Hutchinson 2008, 31-40.)

Since the main focus in the thesis was on Internet marketing, it can be understood better in the context of social media when it is explained later on.

Although, the key principles for it are, making it easy for the target market to find the artist, thinking virtually and acting locally and speaking to the target market (Hutchinson 2008, 156-158.) In the end, the bottom line of all efforts, traditional and non- traditional put into music marketing and promotion, is to maximize sales and exposure (Lathrop 2003, 1).

## 2.2 Social Media

Social media is one of the most-widely discussed topics today, but it is used by the public in such a sense that it has become a trivial matter. The development of technology and decrease of the price of personal computers and Internet access costs have provided more and more people the opportunity to communicate with each other despite geographical location. In fact, when the Internet was first developed for military and government use in the 1960's (Ward 2009), little was it known that a few decades later it would be an ubiquitous part of everyday life in the developed countries. In the course of time several other networks were developed in the other parts of the world, too. The idea then was to connect these networks, which resulted as the Internet of today. Through the Internet it is possible to broadcast world-wide, distribute information and collaborate and interact with other individuals and their computers despite their location. (Leiner, Cerf, Clark, Kahn, Kleinrock, Lynch, Postel, Roberts & Wolff n.d.).

In the context of the thesis, the most important development happened when the network became *social*. Instead of users just receiving information on their computer screens, they were able to contribute to its content. It started with online games in the mid-1980s, in which players not only played, but also left messages to each other. By the mid-1990s online diaries went by the name weblog, better known yet as blog.

The change of the millennium saw the technical development and affordability of devices and Internet access, which helped the rapid growth of blogs as it was easier than ever to create and manage one. While technology might have

sparked this revolution, it never has been the driving force behind online social interaction. Human nature is at the heart of creating and building communities, both off and online. From the very beginning the Internet has been a place for social interaction. Thus, it is called social media. (Barefoot and Szabo 2010, 2-3.) Tuten (2008, 9) agrees by stating that “social media exists in the context of communities- communities built of people who develop and nurture relationships by creating, co-creating, sharing, commenting and engaging in content”.

To form a better understanding of how social media fosters a richer communication, Barefoot and Szabo (2010) listed five fundamentals, which separate it from traditional media. First, social media has revolutionized communication by making it more democratic as best seen with journalism. Still a decade ago news were first announced on TV, radio and newspapers by professional journalists. Today, because of the easy access and “now” factor of social media, civilians have turned into journalists themselves by reporting and sharing videos of what is happening at the present moment in their social media profiles. It is not unusual anymore for major news broadcasting channels to make use of this material, which has many terms, for instance, user-generated content.

The second fundamental is that social media enables people to be part of a community of their own interests. Whereas traditional media does not invite to a discussion, social media fully encourages it. For example, the fans of a certain camera model can communicate and share thoughts with each other from all parts of the world and have a sense of belonging. In this sense social media goes beyond the mainstream radar.

Thirdly it's about collaboration. Working together online has changed the reputation of the Internet of being a hostile and unfriendly place. Collaboration assumes good faith and trust, which brings the best out of people who use different social media tools for projects such as raising funds for cancer research and informing about drug abuse.

The fourth fundamental is the scope of the Internet. In other words, for a marketer the cost of advertisement is much lower online than on TV or in newspapers. Most importantly the cost to access the Internet is steadily decreasing, which means that people (customers) spend more time online. The Internet seems infinite with the 24/7 access to it, thus there's a broader reach to others.

The last fundamental, which is the most important one regarding the thesis is honesty and authenticity. Different kinds of social media tools have provided people platforms on which to share their lives. These can be written in words, pictures or videos. The main idea is that now more than ever it is easy for friends, family and even strangers to be informed of what is happening in one's life. However, there have been cases in which the good faith of people has been misused by individuals and companies. For example, a video diary by a 15-year-old girl, who talked about everyday issues of a teenager in a very straight-forward manner, became an online phenomenon. As soon as it was disclosed that the girl was in fact a 19-year-old actress who, with the creators behind the video diary idea, were hoping to develop it into a movie, like-minded teenagers felt betrayed and shared their negative feelings about it on several social media platforms. This became a scandal for the creators and actress' reputations, when they lost their authenticity through this. The relationships that people have online develop and are treated as real. Due to this, specifically, marketers and musicians must present themselves as authentically as they can. (pp. 4-11.)

### **2.2.1 Social Media Marketing**

As mentioned already social media has changed the way people interact with each other, but it also has changed the way businesses market themselves. "Marketing has changed more in 5 years than in the previous 100 combined" (Turner and Shah 2011, 9). As a result social media keeps evolving at a rapid pace: what can be defined now for the sake of the project's context, can be

ruled out the following month. However, the underlying principles will stay the same.

The easiest way to understand social media marketing (SMM) is to know what it is not. Turner and Shah (2011, 13) think that “traditional marketing is about having a monologue with your customers and prospect. Social media, on the other hand, is about having a dialogue. When you have a dialogue with a customer or prospect, the communication is much more fulfilling (and much more profitable)”. According to Barefoot and Szabo (2010, 13) SMM is simply about using social media channels to promote one’s business and its products, which qualifies then as a form of word-of-mouth marketing. Evans (2010) gives word-of-mouth marketing a deeper meaning by stating that:

*Word-of-mouth marketing relies heavily on the conversation. Social media and word-of-mouth marketing are inextricably intertwined. People talk, people recommend, people suggest. And if they are well connected, they can touch hundreds- and sometimes thousands- of people just by having a conversation that shares their experience. (p. 34.)*

Regarding this Turner and Shah (2011, 16) excellently say that “we can’t forget that a great deal of social media marketing happens offline – after people have turned off their computers”. Even if SMM reaches audiences in new personal ways, it is not the cure for everything. However, it can be a powerful and long-lasting marketing tool when utilized properly. It can help a company build its reputation, increase customer loyalty and receive more revenues.

### **2.2.2 ROI**

There has been an ongoing discussion about what social media can give back to businesses that choose to invest in it. In fact, this is one major reason why some companies choose not to invest in it at all. For every marketing campaign the return on investment (ROI) needs to be measured and “without a positive ROI, there’s really no reason to run a social media campaign” (Turner and Shah 2011, 209). However, with social media it is problematic when the goal of a

marketing campaign is set to be only sales-oriented because the effects are often seen over an extended period of time. The investment spent on social media does not necessarily increase sales immediately. However, besides sales, it may help achieve other milestones that lead to revenue growth. (Turner and Shah 2011, 191.)

On the other hand, Gillin (2009, 92) baldly thinks that the question regarding the ROI is to some extent irrelevant. Many social media experts define revenue growth as a secondary objective. Barefoot and Szabo (2010, 183) find it more important to think of ROI as *Return on Engagement* and Evans (2010, 33) replaces ROI with ROC (Return on Conversation), stating that businesses' primary issue is their conversations with their customers, instead of the marketing messages they send to them. Weinberg (2009, 8) refers to the social media expert Jason Falls who explains that "the problem with trying to determine ROI for social media is that you are trying to put numeric quantities around human interactions and conversations, which are not quantifiable".

A perfect compromise for this issue is given by Turner and Shah (2011) who think that social media platforms are not essentially for immediate selling, but for raising awareness and interest towards the products. If proper discussions and relationship building with the potential customers are done, it would ultimately lead to a business transaction. (pp.126.)

### **2.3 Social Media in Music**

The way musicians and fans interact with each other has changed drastically since the rise of social media. When it was common for fans to send hand-written letters to their idols' fan boxes and hope that they would at least be opened, it is not uncommon now for these two groups to be having a personal conversation online. Artists are closer than ever to their fans.

In addition to direct conversation, both established artists and especially the unknown ones have taken advantage of the free online platforms available.

These particular platforms are called social networking sites, which according to Mayfield (2008) are Internet- based services for users to interact with each other through communication, media sharing and other activities. This has made it easy for musicians to gain recognition by sharing their music on the networking sites with other users, who then in turn share it with others. As a result, the role of a record label in the artist's promotion has started to decrease. At the same time it has become easier for people to discover new music, which they would not necessarily have ever come across otherwise.

However, when countless musicians have started sharing their music online, the Internet has become flooded with new music. This, in fact, has meant that musicians' competition for attention has become tougher. Creeber and Martin (2009) suggest that the amount of new music might have changed people's music listening habits so that they are not paying as much attention to specific records as before. New music has turned dispensable. Moreover, there is a feeling that music critics concentrate more on the information about the artist than the music itself, emphasizing their knowledge of details. Thus, according to Creeber and Martin, music critic Simon Reynolds has argued that:

*The web has extinguished the idea of a true underground. It's too easy for anybody to find out anything now... I sense that there's a lot more skimming and stockpiling, an obsessive compulsion to hear everything and hoard as much as music as you can, but much less actual obsession with specific arty-facts. (p.100.)*

Nevertheless, social media has given rise to many successful music careers, of which a few examples are discussed later. There have been many social networking sites used for sharing music, but for the thesis only the most important and relevant ones were reviewed.

### **2.3.1 MySpace**

MySpace as a social networking site was the most frequently-visited one in the world from 2005 until early 2008, only two years after its launch in 2003 (Cashmore 2006). The site has had a significant influence on pop culture and

music by starting the trend of companies and artists being able to create unique profiles (see Appendix 1), which was mainly possible only for individuals for networking purposes (Lanxon 2008). Therefore, not only were individuals connecting with each other, but also with musicians. The impact MySpace had on the music scene and the state of it today is summarized well by the American music producer Cody Miller (2012):

*MySpace has been dead for 4 years. But it was notorious for teenagers meeting teenagers from different states who went on to have long distance love connections. Music-wise it was very important for both me and my high school bands. I used it a whole lot and added kids from all over the country and had 2000+ "friends". And having each band member have that kind of network helped promote our band page. We booked the majority of our shows through MySpace's messaging feature. Connected with similar bands and were added to shows that way. Venues all had a MySpace profile. So yeah MySpace was great for music, and was used really extensively by artists and venues alike.*

A major feature that MySpace has is the possibility to add music files for others to listen in a way that people who do not have a MySpace account are able to access these files and make playlists of their own. However, sharing the playlists and sending messages to other users are only possible when registered.

Due to users' eager sharing many musicians' recognition has risen, in some cases even to highly successful careers. For example, the British rock band Arctic Monkeys handed out CDs containing demos to the audience at their first show in 2003. They were then shared digitally by fans on the Internet. In addition to this prompt file-sharing a MySpace profile was created for the band by a fan, and its popularity helped them have their music heard and gain attention from the national radio and tabloids. (Park 2005.) Two years from their first show they signed a record deal with the prestigious Domino Records and ever since have released five albums, all of which have received critical acclaim (Leahey n.d.).



Even more of a success story on MySpace was achieved by the British pop star Lily Allen. Allen, whose recordings received rejections from several record labels, decided to make them public on MySpace in the end of 2005. As the views of her MySpace profile rose to tens of thousands, she was offered a record deal, which resulted in Allen releasing her UK chart topping single half a year later. (Plagenoef 2006.) Since then Allen has sold 1,8 million copies of her two albums only in the UK (BPI 2010).

In spring 2008 MySpace dropped from number one in its rankings and since then it has continued to see loss of memberships. There are numerous suggestions for the reasons of this decline. One being that MySpace has failed in developing new ways of engaging its users by relying on the entertainment and music factor of the site (Chmielewski and Sarno 2009). Another explanation is that it is a heavily advertised site, which has made it slower and more difficult to use (Johnson 2011). As a result MySpace can be considered an example of a highly used social networking site, which lost its popularity when not responding to the users' demands. In other words, social media is constantly changing and developing meaning that if a website is thriving today it might not tomorrow.

### **2.3.2 Facebook**

At the moment the most popular social networking site is Facebook, the very same that overtook MySpace in 2008. Launched initially for college students in 2004, Facebook reached one billion active users worldwide in September 2012 (Fowler 2012). Facebook states that their mission is "to give people the power to share and make the world more open and connected", and their overview is as follows "millions on people use Facebook everyday to keep up with friends, upload an unlimited number of photos, share links and videos, and learn more about the people they meet". (Facebook n.d.)

As opposed to MySpace, Facebook encourages users to share personal information in their own profiles, whose visibility can be customized through the

privacy settings for only friends seeing them or everyone. The users choose themselves what information they want to share with others. This can include, for instance, date of birth, place of residency, relationship status and political and religious views. Before anyone is able to access anyone else's data and network with them more effectively, they need to be accepted as friends. This happens when one party sends a *friend request* to the other party, who then decides whether to accept the request or not.

In the context of the thesis the important feature of Facebook is the creation of a *Page*. This is mainly used by companies and artists, although individuals are able to create one as well. The page serves as an interactive platform between the creator of the page and the fans of it. In order to become a page's fan, a registered Facebook user needs to click on the *Like* button, which then enables the user to receive updates on their personal Facebook news feed, which also includes their friends' updates.

In terms of music, this feature lets musicians not only have discussions with their fans, but also, e.g. share their photos, videos and music to be listened or even downloaded, inform about tour dates and generally be closer to the fans (see Appendix 2) (Facebook, n.d.). Unlike an official website, Facebook provides more of an interactive platform and a sense of community amongst the fans. On the other hand, this has given rise to a trend amongst new and up-and-coming artists, who either state their Facebook pages as their official websites or no more update them regularly. This can be due to the financially cost-free maintenance on Facebook, but it is equally important to keep in mind that not everyone has registered on Facebook. Therefore some fans are not able to access updates and information of tour dates, which then can result in a lost of audience ie. profit.

### **2.3.3 Twitter**

Microblogging is simply the act of posting short messages on the Internet (Nesbitt 2009) and Twitter, a social networking service launched in 2006 is the

most popular microblogging tool with over 500 million users today (Dugan 2012). At its very core Twitter is nothing more than a way of describing in 140 characters what is happening at the moment. Brevity and easy-use have always been the key for Twitter's success. (Comm 2009, 21.) Fitton, Gruen and Poston (2009) describe Twitter as a great way for people to connect with large numbers of people quickly and personally in a normal conversation-manner. Twitter could be seen as a cocktail party with several discussions which the user can join or start at any time. (pp.11.)

According to Twitter (n.d.) itself it is a "real-time information network that connects you to the latest stories, ideas, opinions and news about what you find interesting. Simply find the accounts you find most compelling and follow the conversations". Even non-registered users are able to see what discussions are going on. However, only when registered will one be able to join the conversation by sending brief messages known as *tweets*, *following* a person after which the registered user sees the tweets on their home page and vice versa acquiring *followers* themselves (see Appendix 3).

In the top ten most-widely followed Twitter users seven are musicians with the American pop star Lady Gaga being number one with over 30,6 million followers (Twittercounter 2012). This shows how useful and important the service has become in the music industry as musicians are not only able to promote their music, but also share their personal thoughts quickly in real time and converse directly with their fans by seeing their tweets directed to them.

Comm (2009) explains that because of the real-time factor of Twitter, users should interact with their followers in a sporadic way. The followers seeing those tweets at that precise moment can participate and feel the benefits. Those who notice the tweets later could feel that they have missed the opportunity to join the interesting conversation and realize they should pay better attention to the tweets of the one they follow. (pp.119.) The American rocker Amanda Palmer is a perfect example of executing this idea. Palmer is known for using different social media tools to connect with her fans; particularly

her enthusiasm with Twitter has, for instance, enticed her audience to come to spontaneous park shows, as well as brought her direct profit.

One example of her receiving direct sales is when she tweeted as a joke of her being all alone again at her computer on a Friday night, after which some of her followers joined the conversation, and all of a sudden there were thousands of people following the discussion. At some point one of the fans suggested that the group should make a T-shirt, and the next day Palmer's web designer set up a website on which more than 400 T-shirts were sold. In the course of the event Palmer blogged: "Total made on Twitter in two hours=\$11,000. Total made from my huge-ass Ben-folds produced-major-label solo album this year=\$0". (Kaufman 2009).

In summary the opportunities that Twitter provides are countless. Although it can work as a way of earning revenue, the service more importantly is a powerful tool to create a sense of belonging amongst fans and even make some feel privileged. Palmer understood this when she and some of her followers were part of a unique moment, which they together experienced unexpectedly.

## **2.4 Fan Interaction and Engagement**

Today's society craves for the latest news and trends immediately. Thus, in the age of fast-consumerists everyone loses interest more easily and also moves on. On the other hand, it can be expected for the most loyal fans to follow a musician to the end, but even their attention can be lost unless they are engaged. (Make It In Music 2012). Hyatt (2012), an Internet Marketing expert explains how she always becomes shocked at how the musicians she works with are desperate for reaching an increasing number of potential fans without focusing on the fans they *already* have. The reasoning behind this thinking, according to Thompson (2011), is that many are still ingrained with the habits of the old-media advertising, in which a large audience is targeted with the marketing message in a hope for at least a few to act upon it. Therefore

acquiring as many fans on social media as possible is considered important. Yet, Thompson stresses quality over quantity. Evans (2010) agrees by stating: “Having thousands of fans, subscribers, or followers doesn’t necessarily mean success. An engagement factor must come into play with those fans, subscribers and followers for it to be successful”.

Social Media Delivered (2012) points out that “establishing yourself on any social network takes dedication. Posting content is simply not enough. Social media always involves connecting with others, interacting with followers, and building relationships”. Evans (2010) takes this discussion deeper by explaining that before participating in social media and engaging with fans it is crucial to understand that social media is not only about creating a page or tweeting; success cannot be expected from this. It rather is more about holding conversations and connecting with other like-minded people, which also involves trusting each other- and trust is not gained suddenly. Nurturing relationships and creating solid and trusted connections is time-consuming, but extremely rewarding if done properly. (pp. 9-10.)

The benefits of creating a reliable relationship with fans include their increased willingness to share the music with their peers. For example, DJ Brucki (2012) says “the best person to spread the word about you is not you. Artists come a dime a dozen and, frankly we are bombarded with new music daily”. Another benefit, according to Weinberg (2009, 37-38), is when a loyal fan base can give a helping hand when needed. However, active engagement should become a norm and not only used when something is wanted from the community.

Smith (n.d.) approaches the issue from a business perspective and explains how every business uses two key marketing metrics in generating profit. One is the cost in acquiring a new customer and the other is the lifetime value of that customer. Every time a new customer is acquired it costs the company more than nurturing the relationships with the more loyal customers, who regularly purchase from the company as opposed to the new customers making single purchases. However, social media has drastically lowered the cost of acquiring new customers and increased their lifetime. In addition, when reaching a certain

point, the customers do marketing for the company by recommending it to others and therefore bringing in new customers.

The reason for the customers to stay is emotional, and this is where the biggest advantage of social media comes in, it allows having a two-way dialogue. This means that it is possible for companies to bond and make sure that their customers are happy. However, Smith emphasizes that engaging through social media is not suitable for everyone due to reasons such as the need to be perseverant, patient and consistent. One has to grow an authentic fan base slowly and build relationships within that community. Turner and Shah (2011, 126) state this principle as follows: "The last thing you want to do is start selling right away. The first thing you want to do is to start a conversation, to get to know the person and connect in a meaningful way".

Interaction and engagement is considered to be the same by many, and perhaps, it is so. However, in the context of the thesis a distinction was made between these two terms. Ney (2012) asks if engagement within social media is overused and not accurately defined. Rather, it is interaction, but in order to reach the level of engagement it needs to be deeper and more active. Therefore, fans will be regarded as engaged when signs of contribution to furthering the artist's career are shown. In practice this can mean sharing the music to their peers and turning them into new fans- in general being an advocate. Additionally, taking part in conversations and possibly sharing personal information refers to a successfully built trusting relationship between the artist and fans. Although in order to create engagement the artist needs to interact with the fans. Otherwise, how will the fans be engaged, if nothing is provided for them to engage with?

Musicians tend to think that SMM and conversing with fans is easy, but they are most likely the ones who implement it in the wrong way. In fact the best quote to describe the work was found by Gillin (2009, 73) who quoted Cinny Little: "At the end of the day, you have to consider both quantitative and qualitative measures, and you still have to build relationships".

### 3. CASE AND IMPLEMENTATION

#### 3.1 Case Study

Robson (2007) states that in simplicity a case study is the study of a case. The case can be basically anything; at one extreme it can be a person and at the other extreme a global event such as recession. Cases are studied in their context and are often viewed as an easier research option. However, the nature of combining multiple sources for evidence and meeting demanding standards questions the statement. Furthermore, the findings of a case study need to be reassured to readers to prove they are trustworthy. To reach this end two or three different methods of data collection are used, and if the different methods point to the same conclusion the more reliable the findings are.

Studying a single case gives the opportunity to carry out the study in depth, which can capture the process and relationships. A case study has flexible boundaries, which can be tailored to the time and resources available. On the other hand, this can work against the researcher too, causing problems to keep deadlines as they need to be prepared to modify the approach depending on the results, since case studies typically seek to focus on situations which occur naturally. Although, this makes it less artificial than traditional approaches such as experiments and surveys, and most importantly it can be used for widely different types of cases. (pp. 26-28).

In the context of the thesis the Manchester- based singer-songwriter Franco and the Dreadnought (Franco) agreed to act as the case, as he was in need of help in creating a better online presence and building the fan base. The artist was not accustomed in using Facebook or Twitter regularly, nor did he know the limitless possibilities the social media networking platforms can provide. Due to this the starting point was ideal, since it gave the opportunity to practice the theories and build a fan base quite from the beginning.

As it was requested to have a solo artist assigned as the case for easier communication, Franco in fact was previously the front man for the International One, a quintet which signed with a subsidiary of Universal Records. The band gained national and especially local success. However, after the label went

under the recession, Franco was forced to embark on a solo career. The most notable fact of the artist's career so far is that he was asked by Desmond Tutu to write a song celebrating Nelson Mandela's life, which the arch bishop then gave Mr. Mandela as a 90<sup>th</sup> birthday present. (Franco and the Dreadnought 2012).

### **3.2 Communication with the Artist**

The first and only face-to-face meeting with the artist was held in London in February, in which he set the project's main goal to reach 1000 fans by the end of it. Furthermore, ideas were exchanged and long discussions were held during that day, on which I also attended a live performance of his to get a better insight of his character and performing abilities. I felt it was important to be able to see him not only as a musician, but also as the person behind the music. Naturally, a day of quality time together was not sufficient, but enough to learn that Franco had a good stage presence and most importantly a charming personality, which I believed to be the crucial artistic appeal we needed to transmit to his new fans on and offline.

As we would not have been in the same country for the duration of the project, the discussion was kept going via email. Long-distance calls were out of question due to high-cost, although free Internet calls would have been the answer. However, experiencing poor Internet connection, communicating was gladly preferred by typing.

For the whole March, on a weekly basis, links to articles about maintaining social media pages and ideas received from them were sent to Franco via email. I felt it was important for him to read articles written by influential people to understand better how powerful social media can be, when utilized properly. Naturally, I asked him to tell his opinions and ideas, so that together we could tailor a social media image the artist wanted to portrait to his fans. At one point it became evident that Franco was not accustomed in using Facebook, therefore it was decided to switch the discussion from email to Facebook, in



order for him to become acquainted in using the site regularly. Although, emails were still used when, for instance, files had to be sent or one of us was in contact with a third-party person e.g. a music video producer.

In the beginning we updated each other in a constant basis and usually responded to one another within 24 hours. Towards the end of the project the communication became more irregular, for which the most common reasons were lack of time and Franco's strengthened confidence in handling his social media pages himself. The moments when communication would be hectic were during campaigns, when we monitored the outcomes and discussed our findings. In addition, Franco asked me to take care of the sites, when he was away from the country or when something needed to be shared on the sites with a timed schedule.

### **3.3 Creating Online Presence**

"A stronger web presence should be the primary goal of every social media marketing campaign".(Barefoot and Szabo 2010, 15). With this in mind creating a better online presence for the artist's social media pages was started. The very first thing to do was to update all the information (biography, artist description etc.) and pictures on the two main social media pages we were going to use; Facebook and Twitter. However, at that time it became clear that the artist was not accustomed in using either pages regularly, therefore we agreed to focus on Facebook first, until the artist became more knowledgeable about it.

Although, I did not want to forget the use of Twitter completely, I followed the instructions of Brian Botkiller's (2012) article of cross-promotion on social networking sites. I started with installing a widget, which is a web code that displays information streamed from networking sites. Basically, the widget installed in Franco's Facebook page automatically shared the posts on Facebook to his Twitter account. According to Botkiller, cross-promotion of this type increases exposure with people seeing the artist in more places, more often, which then meant better music sales, show attendance and video views

as a few examples. For Franco in the very basic level this meant he was able to save time without posting the same content to Twitter manually. Most importantly, this was to encourage those fans, who were more active on Twitter to participate in the discussions on Facebook as well by clicking the links directing straight to the Facebook post.

A very important decision we agreed upon regarding Facebook was to give people a chance to access the content of the fan page without having to press “like” first. Many fan page owners prefer to have people “like” their pages first to access the content in order to get more likes on their pages. However this is thought to be a strategy, which brings in people who actually do not care for the musician, business or product. Therefore, are considered as meaningless “fans”, when they do not give any value. To be able to build a fan base around people, who were interested and willing to share the music and help the musician, this kind of strategy had to be avoided.

*6 Don'ts of Marketing Your Album Online* article (Unified Manufacturing 2012) states that a crucial mistake is for a new artist to become active on social networking sites all of the sudden. This usually happens when the artist is planning to release new music, and people are very sensitive in noticing that they will soon be pitched into buying something. Therefore, the artist needs to slowly become active 2-3 months before the release. Thus, before we were able to launch any bigger campaigns through social media, it was clear that basic rules were needed to be set in order to get the most out of them. In practice this meant writing down bullet points, which the artist was to follow vigorously to not only increase, but also keep the fans' engagement constant. The bullet points and campaign ideas were influenced by articles regarding social media strategies from websites such as SocialMedia Today, The DIY Musician and Hypebot. To see the bullet points go to Appendix 4.

A list of bullet points for Twitter was meant to be done as well. However, when Franco started gaining followers, his use of Twitter came quite naturally, so I settled in mainly reminding him, if he had not replied to some of his followers' enquiries. Towards the end Franco became active with Twitter on almost a daily

basis, opposed to monitoring Facebook decreasing to a few times a week, since it was easier for him to log in to Twitter from his mobile phone.

### 3.4 Measurement of Success

It has been long-believed that success on social networking sites is measured through the amount of fans, thus it is common for musicians to set up a fan page and acquire as much as fans as they can. However, the problem occurs when nothing is done to make those relationships with fans meaningful, but this is slowly changing. Fan page owners are starting to understand that the engagement rate is more important than the amount of fans. The more engaging and authentic dialogues they can have with their fans, the higher the probability in increasing trust and stronger relationships, which means better sales. (Socialbakers 2011).

Since Franco's main goal was to acquire 1000 fans on Facebook and my job was to help him make those fans and already existing ones meaningful, I incorporated my theory of *build and engage* in the planned campaigns. In simplicity it means that a social media marketing campaign (which can include traditional marketing methods) needs firstly to build the fan base, after which new fans are engaged in a way, which hopefully makes them visit the artist's social networking sites and interact with them regularly. In the best case scenarios the fan shares the artist's music and posts to their friends and turns them into new fans.

In the descriptions of the campaigns it will be stated how the *build and engage* theory has been put into practice with the emphasis on the latter part of it. But it will also show that in the context of the project, only building a fan base is not applicable, while engaging fans can stand alone.

Each campaign and competition had its own goals, which acted as steps towards the main goal. These goals were measured in quantity, which was mainly the amount of new fans gained. Measuring quantity on the other hand

meant not only the amount of interaction the fans had with Franco, but also the quality of the conversation, whether positive, negative or even personal.

### **3.5 Last Man Standing Video Campaign**

Franco's first official video for his single Last Man Standing was released on April 24, 2012, for which the numerical goals were 100 new likes on Facebook and 1000 video views within six days. The strategy to reach these objectives was inspired by Chicago band OK Go's Facebook competition in which fans were not only supposed to share the band's video, but to get the most comments for it to win a unique OK Go piece of merchandise (Finchy 2010). The idea of the most comments was changed into the most shares, in order for the video and Franco's music to be spread more widely. The person who got the most video shares won a Last Man Standing CD and vinyl, a T-shirt and a home gig from Franco. He would have travelled even abroad to perform, if necessary. The idea of the home gig was to enable Franco to strengthen the relationship with the winner in a personal way and also engage with their friends who attended the gig. Details of how the campaign was executed and results can be found in Appendix 5.

### **3.6 Fan Engagement Competitions**

In celebration of Franco signing a publishing deal and Last Man Standing receiving positive response in general, a competition was launched on May 23<sup>rd</sup>. The competition was inspired by an article *4 Ways Facebook is Stupid*, which showed an example of encouraging fans to get creative by filling blanks, and through this getting them highly engaged. (McGaw 2012). Fan engagement was not the only reason for running the competition as two winners were selected, one on Facebook and the other on Twitter. Therefore, it attempted to push fans to be active on both platforms, and turn Facebook fans into Twitter followers and vice versa. Details of the competition can be found in Appendix 6.

As all competition winners were promised a Franco and the Dreadnought T-shirt, pictures of three different designs were shared on Facebook for which

fans were asked to vote for their favorite design. The design with the most votes went on to print and amongst all the voters one was chosen to win the shirt as well. The idea was implemented by a former school friend of mine on their band's Facebook profile, which I found to be engaging and excellent from the fan's point of view, as they were included in the decision-making of what kind of merchandize would they prefer to wear. Details of the competition can be found in Appendix 7.

In August many of Franco's new Twitter followers had become fans on Facebook too. The majority of those new fans were females, thus he requested I launch a competition directed to them. It had to be the last competition regarding Last Man Standing as the focus needed to be on the next single already. Fans were asked to tell who their "Last Man Standing" was, ie. who is the most significant man in their lives. The winner received a T-shirt and a CD. In addition CDs were given to all who submitted a story. Details of the competition can be found in Appendix 8.

### **3.7 Platt Fields Single Charity Campaign**

Platt Fields, Franco's second single about Platt Fields Park in Manchester, was released on October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2012. All profit from the single downloads went to a volunteer organization called *Friends of Platt Fields*, who have been maintaining the park and organizing community events since 1994. The decision to run a charity campaign was made in the hopes of Franco receiving local publicity with different types of media from Manchester featuring the cause.

Bahaijoub (2012) states that in such campaigns it is important to set specific goals and a timeline to measure the success. Thus we set the goal to reach £1000 from the downloads in one week. To support the cause a music video featuring some of the volunteers and fans was produced by local university students as well. Details of the campaign can be found in Appendix 9.

### 3.8 Summary of the Case Implementation

Table 1. The key points of the practical part of the project.

Communication with the Artist.	<p>E-mail and Facebook chat.</p> <p>Discussion about articles and ideas.</p> <p>From regular to irregular basis.</p>
Creating Online Presence.	<p>A stronger web presence.</p> <p>Artist getting accustomed in using Facebook.</p> <p>Cross-promotion between Facebook and Twitter.</p> <p>People would have access to the fan page without clicking “Like” in order to have meaningful fans.</p> <p>Facebook bullet points to follow regularly.</p> <p>Facebook the main fan page and Twitter as a supporting page to drive followers to Facebook.</p>
Measurement of Success.	<p>1000 Facebook fans.</p> <p>Engagement rate more important than amount of fans.</p> <p>Authentic dialogues to increase trust amongst fans for better sales.</p> <p>Build and engage theory.</p> <p>How many new fans acquired and the quality of conversation.</p>

<p>Last Man Standing Video Campaign.</p>	<p>Video released April 24th, 2012.</p> <p>Numerical goals; 100 new likes, 1000 video views.</p> <p>Fans had to not only share the video on Facebook, but to get the most shares.</p> <p>Main prize a home gig so Franco could engage personally with the winner and their friends.</p>
<p>Fan Engagement Competitions.</p>	<p>Three competitions held between May and August.</p> <p>To give fans something to do and be engaged.</p> <p>Cross-promotion between Facebook and Twitter with choosing a winner on each platform.</p> <p>Prize including a CD, vinyl and a limited edition T-shirt.</p>
<p>Platt Fields Single Charity Campaign.</p>	<p>Released October 15th, 2012.</p> <p>All profit to local charity to strengthen local recognition.</p> <p>Numerical goal; £1000 in one week.</p> <p>Video featuring fans.</p>

#### 4. RESULTS

The thesis' main numerical objective was set by the artist, who wanted to reach 1000 Facebook fans by the end of the project. It was known that with only social media the goal could not be reached, as new fans needed to be acquired through regular live performances and other traditional means as well.

However, the result came quite close to the objective with 934 Facebook fans on the last day of October (Facebook 2012). When the project started in February 2012, there were approximately 350 fans. As a result the amount of new fans increased by almost 600. Due to lack of resources, it is difficult to say how many found their ways to the artist's fan page through its consistent maintenance and campaigns executed. The estimation, though, was at least half of the amount, and the major part of the other half would have come from live performances.

One of the thesis' overall objectives was to provide a practical insight on how to improve one's online presence on social networking sites, Facebook and Twitter. The very basic ways to have done this were compiled from several social media experts' advices and then implemented by the artist. Updating the fan pages in a more regular basis than earlier, resulted into fans becoming more aware of what was happening with the artist in the present time and his future plans as well. Therefore, the increased communication between the two parties made their relationship more fruitful, which the artist agreed and was pleased with. By posting a simple update the artist showed interest in his fans and vice versa. However, as the ways of how to improve the social media presence were to follow vigorously by the artist at first, it was equally important to monitor fans' reactions to the updates and adjust accordingly. Additionally, what needs to be kept in mind is that successful tactics used within the case might not work as well with someone else, as well as the strategies which did not work, could be useful for others. However, the overlying principles and the different types of competitions executed in the case can be used in a general sense.



The other overall objective of the thesis was to emphasize the importance of fan interaction and engagement. Interaction between the artist and fans was partly covered in creating a better online presence in the previous paragraph. The interaction expressly worked as a gate in engaging fans. As discussed earlier engagement should be deeper and more active and naturally not all fans were engaged. As a result, in the context of the case it was rather the quality than the quantity which mattered in the general fan base building process. There were about 7-10 fans whom the artist was able to engage with his personal interaction with them. These fans were turned into advocates, since they shared the artist's music to everyone they knew, gave a helping hand when needed or even without asking, took eagerly part in discussions on the fan pages, financially supported the music and generally encouraged other fans to do the same by acting as good examples themselves. No doubt this type of work by the fans, with some being even almost tireless, had been and will be beneficial for the artist as he knows that there are people in whom he can count on. This is a result from personal interaction and generosity towards fans.

A personal objective of the thesis was to plan creative and ambitious marketing campaigns for the artist and execute them as successfully as possible. It happens too often that when a musician releases a single or a video, it usually is implemented by only sharing it on their social networking platforms ie. no effort is put into making the most out of the release and including fans in the process. Instead of marketing the release for an extended duration with adding new elements for the fans to grab onto, the excitement usually lasts for one or two days and then the musician starts to concentrate on the next release.

Due to this, creativeness and ambition in the context of the video campaigns meant building the excitement already weeks before the release and still continuing it long after it. Most importantly fans were included in every step of the way by giving them something to do or new information about the release. In that sense it is felt that the objective was reached. Naturally not every single goal of each campaign was achieved, and even if it is said that goals need to be reachable, there is no regret in setting some goals high and the risk not paying off. Therefore, to be able to learn from the process and the fan base was more valuable and created a good basis for future campaigns.

Another personal objective and a crucial one regarding the artist, was that he would be able to manage his own fan pages after the project. Starting with the artist not being used to using Facebook and Twitter regularly, he managed to learn quite fast and I was pleased with him taking initiatives. Despite the lack of motivation sometimes during the project, there is confidence that the artist will be able to manage his pages and continue communicating with the fans in a personal manner. However, the artist is not signed to a label yet, which means that the time-consuming general management tasks are handled by him. Social media alone is time-consuming, and as the fan base keeps increasing the artist definitely needs someone to help him monitor his fan pages. The artist himself said that the fan pages absolutely need to be maintained firstly by the artist, but with the help of someone else.

## 5. CONCLUSION

When planning an overall marketing strategy it is essential to include social media in it. However, what is even more important to realize that it must not be the only way to market a musician- traditional marketing is still important, and constant touring helps to make an artist memorable and from which musicians earn most of the revenue nowadays. The Internet is drowning of music, and as a result new and up and coming musicians need to find solutions on how to differentiate themselves from the rest- one being fan engagement. Interacting in a deep and personal manner with fans, and letting them feel appreciated and heard through social media will raise the value of a musician in the fans' eyes. Although, when a musician decides to delve into social media in order to connect with people and have their music shared, it is crucial to remember that a fan base is not built overnight.

Once the world of social media is entered, the effort put into it has to be a hundred percent. Even leaving a question unanswered can have a fan getting offended and then losing their interest on the musician, who then could lose revenue. Besides the potential loss of profit, the true loss would be not having the fan spreading the word of the musician, and sharing their music with everyone and thus bringing in new fans. By investing time and money in building the relationship with the fans and being sincerely generous towards them, the musician will be rewarded by having a trustworthy community in hand when help is needed and more benefits in the course of time.

The project's success is difficult to determine as not every objective was reached. On the other hand, it brought up many positive, sometimes even coincidental outcomes at the same time, which proved how influential social media can be. Although the factors believed to hinder the process were for sure the long-distance collaboration, which made the communication slower as it was not possible to reach one another quickly, if something needed to be confirmed. Additionally, if there would have been an opportunity to actually see Franco conversing with existing and new fans during performances it had helped motivate even more. A major problem occurring in fact was not the artist

working with different parties such as the publisher and PR company, but that there was no communication between all parties. Therefore, it made it extremely hard to work towards the objectives as each party had their own.

Clearly, the project's purpose was to create a better online presence and build a meaningful fan base through social media for the artist. However, when orders regarding social media were coming from other parties, it was frustrating and stressful to realize how the work done and planned for it was dismissed. All what was left to do was to find the opportunities and make the most out of them. After all, when working with social media flexibility is a needed trait. Since the artist was not signed to any label, therefore he managed his overall career mainly by himself and additionally had a day job, there was a lack of time, which is needed for social media. However, this turned out to be problematic only when a fan or a contact needed an urgent correspondence from him or when the fan pages needed updating every now and then.

What comprised the successful part of the project was, naturally, achieving part of the objectives. Truly, the biggest positive to take out of it was the massive learning and growing by both. When the project first started, the artist did not have much experience with social media and was not generally active at the computer, but he had gained much confidence and knowledge since then. To which his initiative attitude and being a generous person helped towards surely. In addition, when the communication was not efficient enough from time to time, by the end it became more understanding and compromises were easy to agree on. It was known that social media is time-consuming and not easy and during the project that idea was strengthened even more. However, having studied an excessive amount of theory and putting it into practice was very much rewarding and educating, as well as partly managing the artist.

What to remember is that social media evolves constantly, faster than any other medium. As a result the findings for the thesis might be invalid in the future, although the underlying principles of social media will more or less stay as they are.

Regarding the marketing strategies executed for the artist, they can either work or not work with another artist. It all depends on what type of a person the artist is, what genre is the music they play and their target market. Even if having the same kind of target market as someone else, all artists are still different from one another. Thus the treatment needs to be also accordingly. Therefore, the reliability of the type of the project is very case-specific, and this project can be considered to be reliable.

Finally, recommendations for the future to the artist are many, but only the ones which are more or less related to the thesis' topic will be presented. Firstly, one suggestion that has been mentioned to the artist before is the creation of a monthly newsletter. Since some posts on Facebook or tweets on Twitter might go unnoticed by fans, sending a newsletter to their personal emails would surely provide them with all updates, which can include general news and upcoming gigs. Also, what happened to MySpace can happen to Facebook and Twitter with fans disappearing from the fan pages, after which they would not receive any piece of news. Although, the news can be found from the official website, but for this to happen the website would need to be updated regularly.

Regarding the website, as many new fans have asked where they could buy music from, an online shop could be designed in it. However, the online shop could be more diverse with not only music being sold there, new T-shirts should be designed and all kinds of other merchandize the artist could wish for or come up with. However, when designing merchandize it is also important to think of the target group and what would be useful for them. For example, a tote bag might not be a good idea, as hardly anyone in the age group of over 25s really uses them.

Interacting and engaging with fans must continue regularly in order to gain the benefits received already earlier, as well as updating the fan pages- leaving them quiet for a long duration of time can make the fans' interest decrease. If there's nothing to share concerning the music, it's always possible and even preferable to share trivial updates, for instance, asking fans' opinion of something or basically sharing something personal with them to make the relationship closer. It is understandable that there is not much time for the artist

to be constantly monitoring the pages, thus he would need someone with at least the basic marketing and social media knowledge to help him. When he gets a record deal and has more time to concentrate solely on his music, then there definitely should be more time being used to converse with fans too.

The last but not the least recommendation or in fact a necessity is for when working with several different parties, it would be extremely beneficial for all of them to be introduced to one another. In addition, roles and tasks of each party need to be defined and a common objective set. This would for sure increase the likelihood in achieving the object, when all would work together towards reaching it. It is time-saving, when everyone concentrates on their own area of responsibility by utilizing their expertise, simply making everything more efficient.

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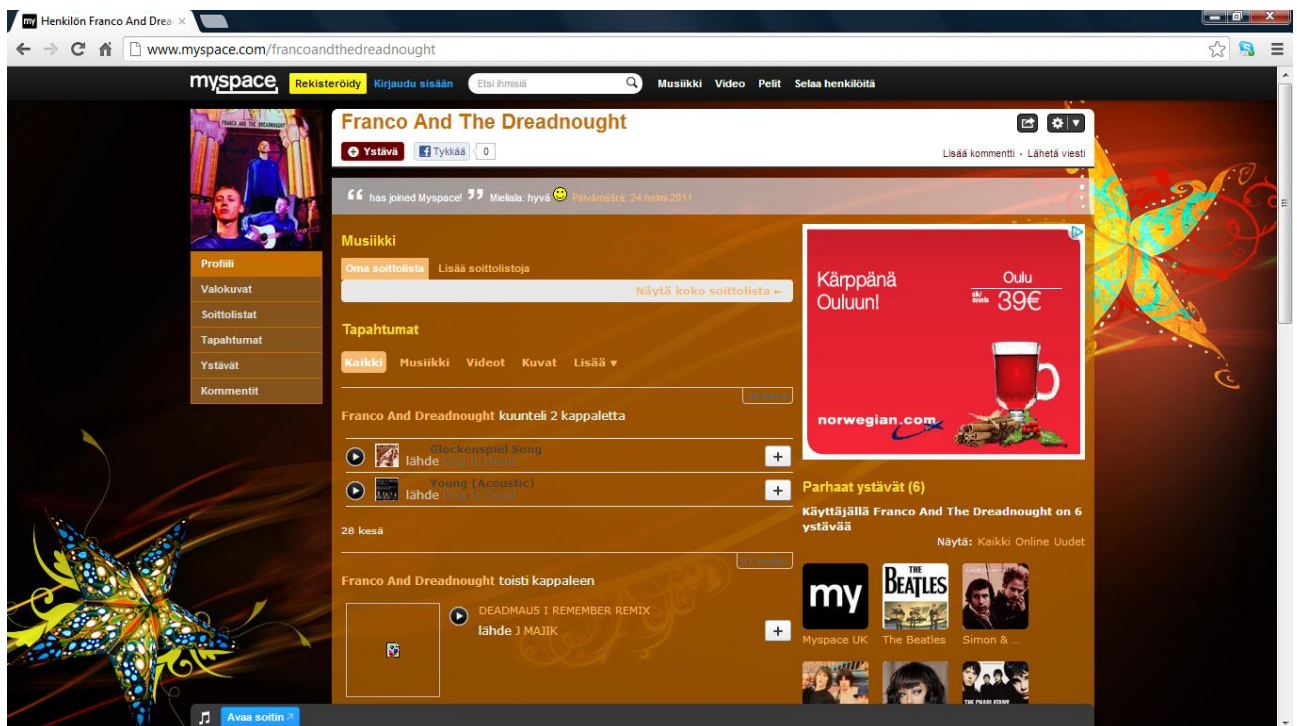
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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1 – MySpace Main

A screenshot of Franco and the Dreadnought's MySpace page at <http://www.myspace.com/francoandthedreadnought>, retrieved on October 24, 2012.

The account was created in 2011, long after most music fans had switched to Facebook and Twitter. Also, see the advertisement on the right side.



## Appendix 2 – Facebook Page Main

A screenshot of Franco and the Dreadnought's Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/FrancoDreadnought>, retrieved on October 24, 2012.

**Franco and the Dreadnought**  
912 likes · 163 talking about this

Like Listen Message

Musician/Band  
Last Man Standing.

About Photos Free 6 Track EP Events Likes

Highlights

Post Photo / Video Music

Write something...

Franco and the Dreadnought shared a link.  
5 hours ago

How nice of Tim from Indie Bands Blog to include pic in the park winning picture here.

**Franco and The Dreadnought – Platt Fields – video | Indie bands blog**  
www.indiebandsblog.com

Franco and The Dreadnought who I wrote about back in April 2012 is working with a local charity to try and raise funds with the

Like · Comment · Share

2 people like this.

**Janice Ross** Very nice indeed xjr  
5 hours ago · Like

Write a comment...

3 Friends  
Like Franco and the Dreadnought

Recent Posts by Others on Franco and the Dreadnought See All

**Sanctuary Rock Bar Burnley**  
Franco and the Dreadnought LIVE FRIDAY 16TH NO...  
4 2 1 · Sunday at 11:22pm

**David Kingston**  
So listening to Franco and the Dreadnought, plan b a...  
2 · Sunday at 6:59pm

**Janice Ross**  
American Dream-Gona burn it right out....xjr  
3 · October 20 at 4:21am

**David DuPree**  
I'm a fan! Liked the page!  
4 4 · October 20 at 12:54am

**Sharon Dean**  
Hi Just saying hello from Team Franco – please tell all...  
4 1 · October 20 at 12:19am



## Appendix 3 – Twitter Account

A screenshot of Franco and the Dreadnought's Twitter account at <https://twitter.com/FrancoDnought>, retrieved on October 26, 2012.

See the type and amount of tweets Franco has sent since the account was created in February 2012, and the number of his followers as well as how many he is following himself at the time.



## Appendix 4- Facebook Bullet Points

After sending social media- related articles for Franco to read, he requested that I would write down 5-10 bullet points with explanations for Facebook, which he would then print out and place on his wall to remember to follow. Below are the original bullet points, which naturally changed in the course of time, as it was easier to see what worked in practice and what not.

The most significant changes were instead of posting content every day, it became 3-5 post per week in average. It became more important to continue discussions already started with fans than starting always a new one. There were moments when new fans came in a larger amount in a short time, which made it difficult to send everyone a personal message. In addition, tagging people, bands and companies seem to be a problem, whether of technical or human error, it was hardly done, which could have affected visibility.

### 1. Post content EVERYDAY

- to have people talking about you on Facebook is easier when they have something to talk about
- even if you don't have anything coming up Franco+Dnought related, you can still post something -> funny pics/videos/new songs that you've discovered, basically anything! Show more of your personality
- when you post, you can try also to start a conversation e.g. -> here's a great song from 2012, what do you guys think? having questions makes people more likely to join the conversation
- you could also start conversation without posting any content -> how are you guys doing this sunny thursday afternoon?/what are you guys up to this saturday evening? etc. be casual every now and then
- remember Google Trends? if there's something interesting there, you could post e.g. a link of the issue and ask for people's opinions
- very important notice; if you have more than one thing to post during one day, then make sure that there's many hours since the last post, you don't want to be spammy

-but remember use this bullet point more in occasion when you don't have Franco+Dnought related stuff to announce.

## **2. TAG TAG TAG**

### **3. Thank the person who has liked your page EVERYTIME**

-everytime someone likes your page, send them a personal message in their inbox to thank them (even if it would be your friend, still thank them)

-remind of the free downloads you have in Soundcloud, if they live in the UK tell them that if you come to their city to perform they could ask for a guestlist spot, they'd feel free to ask questions from you etc. -> give them the impression that you are easily approachable.

-do not sound spammy, no one really wants 'Like my Facebook page!' 'Buy my album!' types of messages, you know?

### **4. Respond to people EVERYTIME**

-people saying good stuff of you on the Facebook wall, thank them!

-people asking questions, reply!

-even a simple like can do it, but it's better to start an actualy conversation e.g. 'Franco I really loved your gig yesterday!' ->'Thank you, appreciate that. Hope to see you next time too!'

- bands tagging you, like India Mill, remember to like those too!

### **5. Share what people have shared on your wall**

- this applies more when people have e.g. blogged about you or filmed you during a gig

- share those on your wall, and remember to thank too!

- remember when you were at the office, and someone had posted a video of your gig on the wall, and I showed you how to share it? do that! your fans will love being noticed

### **6. Sunday covers**

- Manchester/UK bands -> recognition and hopefully the chance to support

- international bands -> international recognition

- when people request covers keep in mind also which song would be useful in covering e.g. bands that are in now like Bon Iver, Lana Del Rey, Wild Beasts etc. people are searching for Lana del Rey stuff on the net, because she is huge, so the huger the better people would bump into a cover of yours.
- if a band replies to you, continue the conversation!
- when filming think of cool spots to film
- personally I like when artist cover songs from a genre completely different from theirs and also when they make a song sound completely different. imitation won't get cover songs recognition.
- TAG!!! if it's not possible to tag, then share the video straight on the artist's wall!
- also if you're having trouble with the tagging you could send the link to me during the weekend then i'll post it for you on Facebook.

## **7. TAG TAG TAG always when you can**

-tagging gives better chances of recognition, when at The Farm I posted songs of 2011 videos and tagged the artist, the talking rate went a bit up, and everyday there came a new like! well not 100% sure if it was because of the videos, but certainly can say that at least the talking rate went up.

## **(8. Competitions when appropriate time)**



## Appendix 5 – Last Man Standing Video Campaign

The video for *Last Man Standing*, Franco's first single, was produced by a university group from Manchester. Asking students to film a music video turned out to be a good decision financially, since students usually carry out these kinds of projects for study credits, thus no budget had to be made for it. Franco received offers from seven different student groups, from which he picked the most suitable one based on previous film material and the students' plans on how to execute the video.

During the shooting of the video, Franco's official photographer took photos of the set in order to share them on Facebook to arise fans' curiosity on the final product. Initially, the video was supposed to be released in March, however, here the risk of a budget-free video came in hand as it took slightly longer for us to get the final product. Despite this we used the additional waiting time to work on the online presence and Franco's interaction with fans. On April 1<sup>st</sup> we finally got the video, although, we were not able to release it on that week, as Franco was set to be two weeks on holidays in Sri Lanka, in which we expected the Internet connection to be poor, and I needed him to have full access and focus on the campaign. Therefore, we decided to release the video April 24<sup>th</sup>, for which he had more than one week to recover from the trip and converse with fans.

Franco did not want to leave though before giving fans an exclusive chance to see the video in exchange of their emails. Those who were interested were asked to comment the Facebook post with their emails and they received the non-public video link in the same evening. I had previously asked him of how he felt in creating a newsletter to be sent to fans' emails once or twice a month, but I never got a straight reply regarding this. I believe that collecting emails at this point could have been better used for Franco's advantage, as in the end fans might disappear from social networking sites, and not get further updates, as opposed to having them delivered directly into their emails.

However, I was satisfied with Franco coming up with ideas of his own and taking the initiative in making them happen, which was one of my goals. Eighteen emails were collected and on the following day he received comments

that fans were not able to see the private video. He tried to fix the problem, but run out of time while rushing to the airport. Our expectations of poor Internet connection were right, which made it impossible for him to solve the problem overseas. He asked me to change the settings for the video and send it again to the fans. I was able to change the video settings from private to a link, which could be only seen by people who had received it. On the other hand, sending the link turned out to be difficult as some who had requested it were Franco's friends who mainly commented by Franco already having their email. Not knowing these emails and thinking that it would be unfair to send the link only to others, I decided to wait for Franco to come back. The link was finally sent on April 13<sup>th</sup> almost two weeks later, which felt disastrous. It could have been worse though, as negative outbursts were avoided and it seemed that people were sympathetic of the situation. However, in the future, enough time needs to be reserved in case of technical problems.

One of the Facebook bullet points was to post cover songs Franco did of other artists' songs on Sundays. Inspired by this, he gave his fans a chance to cover Last Man Standing by providing lyrics and chords. This was the last attempt to create excitement before the video release. A few showed interest in covering the song, although in the end we only got one. Franco said that it was probably too early to run a competition like this, as only few of his fans had a musical background. Despite the lack of participation, he was extremely satisfied with the quality of the cover coming from a musician in Italy, who also can turn out to be a useful connection if planning shows abroad.

For the actual video release Franco wanted his music and the video to be shared and spread as much as possible in order to build the fan base. Thus, we agreed on the strategy of launching a competition, which encouraged people to do just that- share and spread. Not only were people asked to share the video on their Facebook walls, but they had to ask their friends to share it too, and the person with the most shares wins. Through this we hoped for more people to discover Franco's music and become a fan on his Facebook page.

The reason for people to engage in the competition had to be worth their effort, this is why we thought that only merchandize as the prize was not enough. As a

result Franco was set to play a home gig for the winner, which not only gave the fan to live a unique experience, but Franco was also able to connect with the fan in a very personal way and most likely turn them into a dedicated fan for many years to come. The importance of a musician connecting with their fan personally came from my own experience at a live performance. I was approached by one of the band members, who sincerely thanked me for being a fan of theirs and offered to give me their merchandize and anything else I asked for. During our conversation when I explained to the band member how I thought there was hope in the music scene due to bands like his, he made me realize something important, when he answered back that it was not because of the bands, but the fans that there was still hope. I was impressed by his generosity and words and thought if a new musician would use this type of approach with their fans they would have the advantage in standing out. After all it is the fans, who play the biggest part in taking one's music career forward.



**FIGURE 1. Last Man Standing video Facebook campaign launch.**

As it was the first campaign we did together with Franco, I took it more as an opportunity to gain insight of what type of people would Franco's music attract and what kind of numbers were we capable of reaching. We set the numerical goals to be 1000 views for the video and 100 new likes on Facebook by the time the winner for the competition was announced. This gave us six days to reach those numbers. I was responsible for maintaining the Facebook page for the duration of the competition, as Franco did not feel fully confident in handling the page at that moment yet. I planned to update the fans on a daily basis providing bits of information of how the competition was going on, which also was meant to act as a reminder for them that they could still enter the competition, if they hadn't yet or keep telling their friends to share the video.

Already from the beginning of the competition a problem occurred as I realized that when sharing the video on one's own wall, the text which had the rules written was not shared with it. Therefore, many had the video on their wall, but not the reason for it. Although, some did send messages to their friends telling them what to do. This however was not the biggest problem, since a friend of mine mentioned that she had shared the video on her own wall, but it could not be seen on Franco's Facebook page that she had shared it. Through this I noticed that only those people who did not have their privacy settings set to completely private were seen to have taken part in the competition. It was out of the question to ask people to change their privacy settings. Therefore, we decided to wait until the competition was over and hope that someone who was seen to be taken part had many friends share from their wall. This kind of drawback could have been perhaps avoided, if I would have studied more on competitions like this and Facebook rules. However, marketing with social media is best learnt when actually doing it and monitor people's reactions and then act accordingly depending on the situation. In other words there had to be space for flexibility.

When the competition ended, there was not one fan who stood out with the most shares. I was taken aback by this, because first of all we could not see how widely the video was actually shared on Facebook. Secondly the true winner was not found, thus, we were not able to be completely fair in our decision of who would win the home gig. As a solution Franco suggested that

instead of having one winner, we would pick five and film all the home gigs, which then would be edited into one promotional video. I thought it was a great idea and asked him to pick five fans, who he did not know beforehand at all.



**FIGURE 2. Winners of the home gigs announced on Facebook.**

The numerical goals for the campaign were partly reached. Before the competition was launched Franco had 367 fans on Facebook and when the winners were announced it reached 396. We were not even near the goal of reaching 100 new likes. Reasons might be that perhaps we set the goal too high or Franco's Facebook page settings were set in a way that people did not have to press "like" in order to access the page's content. However, we believed that the settings being the way it was brought in more fans, who actually cared about the artist. Regarding the video views, I was extremely surprised that it passed 1000 views already after 48 hours. The views kept increasing day by day reaching up to ca. 1720 within six days.

Concerning Twitter, we did not set any goals for it, as we chose to set it aside for the time being. Although, a very important coincidence happened on that platform, which gave proof that surprising connections can be made on social media. Franco was contacted by a fan of his old band, who asked if he could play at his wedding and it happened to be that this fan was good friends with former professional football player, Manchester United legend Gary Neville. This turned out to be an excellent contact, as Gary Neville did tweet the Last Man Standing video to his followers. There is no doubt that many video views came from this, but according to the video statistics the goal for the views would have been reached without it as well.

In general, the response to the video and competition were positive. Many comments were received from friends and strangers, who were delighted with the outcome and wishing Franco all the best. There was no single negative comment shared in public. The fan base grew with meaningful fans and old fans were engaged with the competition. What I consider to have been the most successful part of the whole campaign were the home gigs. Even though in the end two out of five gigs were organized, since two of the winners did not have the resources to organize the events and one gig was arranged between two winners who were friends with each other. In this case we could have chosen three additional fans to have a home gig, but we ran out of time.

Despite this the two home gigs were held in local pubs, as the winners wished so, which proved to be even better. At both gigs there were about twelve guests excluding local pub visitors, to whom Franco gave his business cards and interacted with after the gigs. During that weekend three new fans appeared on Facebook. Additionally, part of the plan was to take pictures of those people who were at the gigs and add them to Facebook in order for them to tag themselves in. This would then show up on their personal profiles for their friends to see, who then hopefully would be curious enough to visit Franco's Facebook page. However, Franco's official photographer could not make it, therefore, we had to settle for low quality pictures. This perhaps was the reason for people not tagging themselves. Additionally, the promotional video could not have been done.

The winners of the home gigs were extremely delighted of the experience and they developed a close relationship with Franco. As a result they still keep in touch and have told Franco how they have turned their families and friends into his fans by constantly playing his music to them. Through this personal experience we managed to turn fans into evangelists. Although making money was not the most important aspect in the context of the project, I told Franco to take some CDs with him to the gigs and ask people for voluntary donations to cover expenses. From the two gigs Franco sold 23 Last Man Standing EP CDs (containing 7 songs for people to get to know other songs more and one unit's production costing under £1) and got tips which resulted in him earning £155. Taking all aspects into account the campaign turned out to be highly profitable.

During this campaign I came to learn that a major part of Franco's target audience were people in their thirties. Franco himself is in his early thirties, thus the themes his songs address are something what people in more or less the same life situation as Franco is are able to relate to. In addition, most indoor performances Franco does are pubs with a customer base forming from day workers. This was a valuable piece of information regarding future marketing attempts.

## Appendix 6 – Fill In The Blanks Competition

In mid-May Franco had signed a publishing deal and Last Man Standing was receiving positive reactions from the public, therefore, it was decided that fans would get the chance to celebrate this occasion by taking part in a competition launched on May 23rd. I was inspired by an article by McGaw (2012) of running a “fill in the blanks” competition. Franco was pleased with the idea, as it was simple, fun and allowed people to engage with creativity. We agreed on having two winners, one picked on Facebook and the other on Twitter, who would receive a T-shirt, CD and a vinyl. The idea behind this was to get fans active on both platforms- Facebook fans would turn into Twitter followers and vice versa with the main emphasis on getting more Twitter followers.

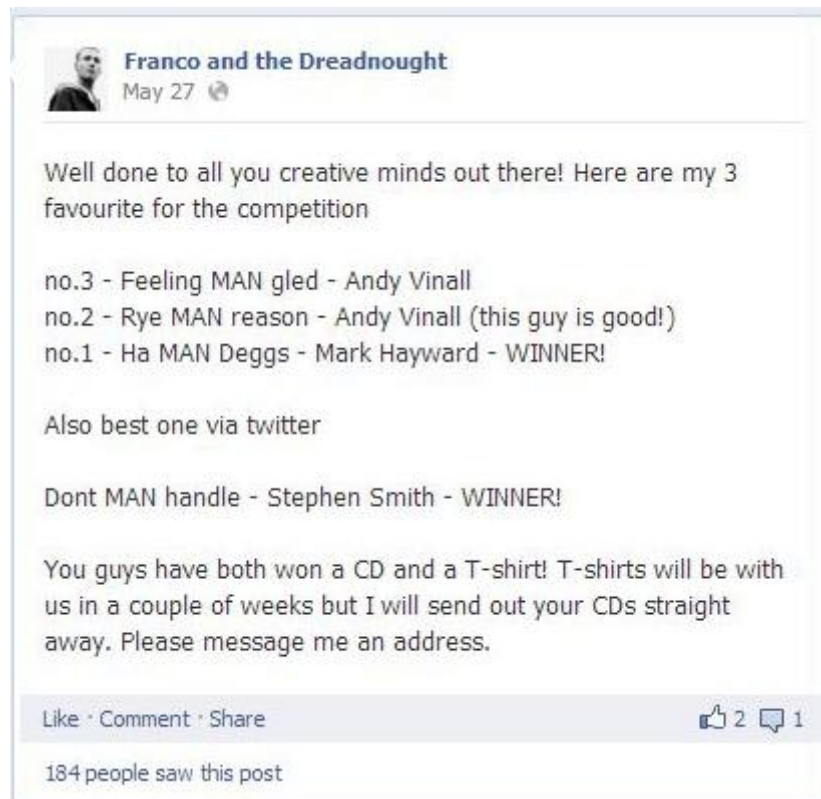


**FIGURE 3. Fill in the Blank Competition and fans’ submissions.**

Fans were supposed to fill the blanks in the following sentence “Franco + The Dreadnought – Blank Man Blank”. On Facebook 55 entries from 14 people were submitted and on Twitter 3 submissions were submitted. The engagement level on Facebook was in a pleasing level as opposed to Twitter, which did not reach the engagement level hoped for. One Twitter follower became a fan on Facebook, but additional Twitter followers were not gained during the



competition. It became evident that Twitter was not a platform in high use by Franco's fans at that moment. This could be due to reasons of fans, who did not have a Twitter account wanting to register yet to another social media platform, and those who were following Franco on Twitter already did not feel engaged sufficiently with the artist in the time being.



**FIGURE 4. Winning submissions.**

## **Appendix 7 – T-Shirt Voting Competition**

Besides of being able to sell only CDs, Franco was in need for more merchandize to provide to fans who wanted more. In addition, a T-shirt was promised to all previous competition winners. Therefore, printing T-shirts were late in schedule as the voting competition planned for it took place in mid-June, two months after the first competition winner was chosen. This is due to the designer, who as a student was busy with her final exams at the time being. I was not too satisfied with having the fans to wait for their prizes and in this case prizes which did not exist yet. However, Franco was quick in sending the CDs to all winners, who seemed patient enough to wait for the T-shirts.

As the fifteen different designs were sent by the designer, I asked Franco to pick his favorite three designs to be shared on Facebook for fans to vote on their favorites. As Last Man Standing started to become an unofficial slogan used by fans to call Franco, I suggested having a limited edition design, which had those words in it. Thus, it was agreed that for a specific period of time fans were able to order this limited edition T-shirt. When the chosen designs were shared on Facebook, fans voted by simply pressing “like” and commenting on the design they liked the most. To get people to cast their votes in, one lucky winner amongst all voters was given the T-shirt. All three designs received votes, although one of them was the clear winner with double amount of votes compared to the other two designs.

When the winning design and winner of the free T-shirt were announced, I found myself disappointed as not only was the winner Franco’s close friend, but also the policy for receiving the T-shirt had been changed without any negotiation. Instead of being able to buy the T-shirt, the fans had to earn one by getting ten people to “like” the Facebook page. Firstly this went against our agreement of not having meaningless fans on the page, and second it did not look good to promise fans something in the beginning and not keep the promise in the end. There were many fans willing to rather buy the T-shirt than asking their friends to like the page. However, it was not applicable to change the rules for a second time. Franco agreed that breaking a promise in this case was not a wise decision, and I also asked him to communicate with me about his plans

better next time. Perhaps, as a compromise we could have given fans two ways in ordering a shirt, the first being simply purchasing and the other bringing in ten new likes, though this did not occur to me at the time. Franco's strategy did bring twenty new likes, for which I told him he needed now to try and convert those people into real fans by interacting with them.



FIGURE 5. The T-shirt design with the most votes and how to receive one.

## **Appendix 8 – Your Last Man Standing Competition**

In August Franco was advised by his American PR company to follow a vast amount of people on Twitter in the hopes of turning them into Facebook fans. This strategy built the fan base with approximately 80 new likes in two weeks. The concern, however, was if these new fans were meaningful. Thus, Franco requested I launch a competition directed to the female fans, as the majority of the new fans were female.

At first Franco wanted people to share the Last Man Standing video to as many places as possible, but I did not feel like repeating what we already had done when we launched the video, since we were not able to see who all had shared it. Additionally, most of the new fans had shared the video on Facebook and Twitter already, hence this tactic was not considered appropriate. Regarding the target group for the competition I wanted a more feminine approach to it. Therefore, I thought of asking fans to tell who their “Last Man Standing” was ie; who is the most significant male in their lives, with which Franco was pleased.

We were expecting to have at least ten stories shared with us, but received only six. However, in this case quality of the submissions indeed surpassed the quantity. It was touching to read fans’ stories of their brothers being terminally ill or loving husbands, and amazing in the sense that they were willing to share very personal stories in public. I found this to be a sign of fans trusting in Franco and encouraging him to pay back that trust by taking care of the relationships he had with his fans.

The winner was given one of the limited design T-shirts and a CD and the next two best submissions a CD. Although in the end due to brilliant stories from all, everyone was rewarded with a CD. I was delighted with Franco making the initiative in contacting some of them personally. For example, he sent an extra CD to be given to one’s alcoholic father and suggested that he could play a charity show for one’s ill brother and other child patients at the hospital. This is the type of communication I was aiming for- when the artist becomes giving without asking anything in return.

New Competition. As loads of the new fans on this page are beautiful women, the prize is a sexy, ladies T-shirt (as modelled below). Guys you can still enter, just make sure you got a lady to give your prize to!

To enter simply tell us in the comments who your "last man standing" is. In other words the most significant guy in your life, and why. The best wins a shirt and cd, second & third a cd.

Winner will be announced on Thursday evening, so get all your friends in it too!



**Lauren Sketchley** My "last man standing" is Andy Eyre, not only is he a great guy, he is a wonderful father who would do absolutely anything for his family as well as put up with me! he deserves a medal! we love him lots! ❤️

August 20 at 6:39pm · Unlike · 🗳️ 2

**Catherine Griffiths** Mine has to be my dad ❤️ In 24 years of stupid antics, he has never said one bad word to me. He always cheers me up with his dancing, crazy hats, And our "extreme BBQ's" in the snow + rain. He's given me everything I have ever wanted, even when we probably couldn't even afford it. I get to work with him everyday in our family business, where he never forgets to keep me supplied with lots of tea and toast, and the occasional Bacon sarnie. He is also the only person I know to mix Jack Daniel's with Scotch and pretend he isn't drunk.

He's not just my dad, he is my best friend. I love him lots ❤️

August 20 at 7:18pm · Unlike · 🗳️ 11

**Cake Man Show** Hi, I'm Jane, Cake Man's (John's) wife. My last man standing is John. A lot of people 'think' they know him but they really don't. We have been married for 15 years (on Thursday). In those years we have seen our share of troubles financial, his parents being ill, people being nasty...no matter what trouble though he has always maintained a sense of humour. He makes me laugh every day, he loves me and our 3 babies (dogs) and he loves his friends and music. He is always putting other people before himself and everytime something or someone knocks him down he will always bounce back. People don't know him at all!!! He is kind, generous, romantic, funny and the best friend anyone could ask for. He is and will always be my last man standing and I will always love him. Jane (Mrs. Cake Man)

August 20 at 7:25pm · Unlike · 🗳️ 1

**Oscar Greenthing** Mine is my brother, despite him not being a 'man' exactly. He is by far the most important person in my life. Without him I would be nothing. When I'm feeling down he makes me smile without actually having to do anything and he never ever judges

FIGURE 6. Fans' "Last Man Standing"

## Appendix 9 – Platt Fields Single Charity Campaign

Franco's next single was set to be released in autumn, and for it I wanted to execute a campaign, which would strengthen his local recognition. A song of his called *Platt Fields* is about Platt Fields Park in Manchester, and so it happened a volunteer organization *Friends of Platt Fields* for the park existed. Both me and Franco are fond of charities, thus, in order to reach the main goal of the campaign we decided that all proceeds of the single sales would go to the volunteers and by this increase the likeliness of receiving local media coverage.

As the Last Man Standing single and video's reception were overall good and Franco's fan base more dedicated than in the spring, I set an ambitious numerical goal for the single sales to be £1000 in one week. The strict time limit for this was to help monitor the campaign's progress better and give a sense of urgency for people to donate. The fan engagement part of the campaign was to give the chance for Franco's fans to participate in the music video. The idea behind this is that not only would Franco be able to interact with them more personally, but also the likelihood of the video being shared was higher as fans appearing in the video would eagerly show it to all of their friends.

For the video production Franco would have wanted to work with the same filming crew as with the first video, but the group was not active anymore, thus, another one had to be found. What made the task more difficult was students on summer vacation, and not checking their emails before returning to school in September. Luckily, Franco's official photographer knew a few award-winning students who were up for the task cost-free, although, the shooting could not have been earlier than the beginning of September, as they were unavailable. As a result the date was set for the first Sunday of September, and we were very lucky that the weather was good then.

I came up with the video's plot basis, in which fans had to be portrayed as people spending their time normally in the park, for example, having a picnic, playing games and relaxing, the volunteers doing their work and then Franco going around the park with people recognizing him. Most importantly, though, was to at least have a glimpse of all fans on the final product to avoid their disappointment of not being seen in the video. Additionally, Franco's speech in

the end about the cause and instructions how to donate had to be concise and clear. According to Franco there were about 30 different extras on the set during the day, all to whom he gave a CD as thank you.

I had gathered a sheet consisting of local blogs, newspapers, radio with the addition of environmentalism sites and blogs which had already featured Franco previously. To these I sent emails explaining briefly about the park, the volunteer organization and the cause, and a private link to the song. Before I was able to send them, though, we needed to set the official release date for the single, for which I had to know the approximate date the editor could send the finished video. Due to slow communication I had to keep delaying the release date in the sense of having at least four weeks time to follow up the press. Finally we got an answer of the editing process taking 2-3 weeks being done by the end of September. Also, Franco did not want to pressure the students with the video as they were doing it for free, thus we set the release date for the single and the video to be October 15<sup>th</sup>. This gave me five weeks to contact and chase press, and two extra weeks in case of technical problems with the video and more than enough time for the interested press to edit their story, which I was very pleased with.

To build up excitement for the release of “Platt Fields”, the initial plan was to release the unofficial link to the song on October 1<sup>st</sup> and a 30 second preview of the video a week after that. However, as I contacted the 45 media sites I had put together, one of them had already shared the song on their Facebook and Twitter. I should have asked them in the emails not to share the link yet. Thus, I was forced to share the previously unheard song with Franco’s fans already in mid-September. This affected the schedule in a way that Franco wanted the video preview to be released already much earlier than planned, leaving more than two weeks until the official release with nothing to build up excitement with. He then suggested if the official release date would be earlier, but there was no chance in doing that, as I had spent several hours in emailing media contacts stating that the official date was October 15<sup>th</sup> and additionally would lose valuable time in chasing them.



I thought of running a competition to get their minds around the next single, in which fans had to post pictures related to a park, as we still hadn't asked them to share images with us. In the end nine very diverse park pictures were posted on Facebook and tweeted, from which one clearly stood out by managing to make Franco and me speechless. Seeing a dedicated fan definitely motivated Franco in keeping in touch with fans and working hard for his career. The competition turned out to be quite engaging also for fans, who did not take part by sharing a picture, but by commenting on those which they liked.



**FIGURE 7. Pic in the park competition winner.**

As excitement was built and Franco telling me that the single would rather be released as an EP with two additional songs and an acoustic version and quite a few music sites were interested in featuring the cause, things were looking better. However, I was worried due to hardly any local media responding to me. Therefore, I had to contact additional 30 blogs, which I thought perhaps would not be interested in featuring a non-local cause, but I had to try and get more coverage. One minor problem, which also occurred at the moment was the video needing some editing. Franco and the volunteers hoped to see more cultural diversity in it as the area surrounding the park was multicultural, which I



completely agreed with. Since we did reserve time for technical problems, I was not too concerned of the issue on hand.

Franco then asked if we could release the video earlier than the now Platt Fields EP. At first I was not keen on doing that, but he insisted on it so we agreed to have the video released on October 11<sup>th</sup>, 4 days before the EP to build up more excitement. Here is when a major problem came in hand- the video was edited accordingly, but the audio and image were not in sync anymore. Once again having a cost-free video production showed its negative side as it took astonishingly until the end of the week to fix the problem. It was a shameful moment as a day before the video was supposed to be released, it had been announced on a local radio interview. What was even more worrying was not being able to provide a minimum one week edit time for the sites interested in featuring the cause. All I could do was hope they would be sympathetic and write about it.



**FIGURE 8. Platt Fields' video Facebook release, finally on October 14th.**

The EP was released on Bandcamp, a site where musicians can upload their music for sale, since I wanted everyone to have access to it even if they did not own a social media account. Initially, I wanted the Bandcamp link to be featured during Franco's end speech in the video to give people a quick way to buy the EP, but it was too long for the video screen size. Instead Franco's Facebook link was placed there, which I was not completely satisfied with as not everyone had a Facebook account. Therefore to try and have the Bandcamp link seen, we placed it in the profile descriptions of Facebook and Twitter.



**FIGURE 9. The Platt Fields EP Facebook post**

The video had received a few hundred views within 24 hours, which did not please Franco, thus he wanted to increase the views by having people share it for the prize of a home gig during his November UK tour. Firstly, I did not feel like repeating what we already had done. Secondary, I wanted to see the reflection of the true fan base at that moment. I told him that on the fourth day of the campaign we would evaluate the situation again, as local football legend Gary Neville would be back in town to whom we could ask a favor from.

Before the release we had a discussion with Franco of how we would price the EP, as Bandcamp lets the account user decide for themselves. At first Franco had set it to £2 minimum, but I wanted it to be as “name your price”. The reasoning behind this was to let people decide how much they would like to donate to a charity, and through which I was sure that people would pay in average 150% more than the wanted price, even if it meant taking a risk of some downloading it for free. It remained like this for the first day, after which Franco changed it to minimum of £2.5. I was not glad about it at first as I did see people tweeting they had bought the EP for £5 and one blog writing that people had the chance to decide the amount. Franco’s reasoning for it was that he did not want to pressure people in paying more and that the amount would act as a guidance for those who had not bought digital music previously. With this he hoped it would not put off those who were willing to pay more while helping some to decide. Needless to say I was satisfied with the explanation as it showed improvement in communication, although I still would have hoped for him informing me beforehand.

On the fourth day of the campaign I finally got my hands on the statistics of the EP sales. It was unfortunate to see that neither of our pricing strategies really mattered, as only seven people had purchased it with the total amount being dreadfully £40. I could not have felt more shocked and disappointed to see that, but in all truth I was more disappointed in the fans than in our work, even if we could have done many things better. Still I feel that perfect strategies and everything going accordingly could not have helped the cause. Perhaps, the timing was not right or the goal was too ambitious. Either way in my point of view it was saddening that Franco had given a lot to his fans only to witness

that sometimes trusting in the good will of people did not work this time. Especially when all profit of the sales was going somewhere else but to him.

Franco told me that if we would get £100 and 1000 video views in one week we could be satisfied with the result. Gary Neville's tweet of the video to his followers brought a few hundred views more and Franco started asking his family and friends if they could donate. Earlier he did not want to ask as he also wanted to see the true fan base we were building. I agreed on running the home gig competition in order to get more video views and publicity for the cause. I wanted to have another go with the cross-promoting strategy on Facebook and Twitter with choosing two separate winners on each platform, as done earlier. It did finally bring us much more than 1000 views, but with only a few participating in winning the home gig. Reasons could be that fans had already earlier shared the video, and did not feel like sharing it again and that the home gig strategy was not unique for them anymore.

In the end the of the campaign the sales were £120 (£5 more after a thank you note had been posted) by 18 people, from which Bandcamp took 15% and the banking system took their small cut leaving us with £103,25 with which we were glad with in the end. Also, according to Franco only a fraction of the new sales were from his friends. I assured Franco that one day our initial goal will be reached and despite it being a numerical disaster, many positives occurred during the process.

To strengthen his local recognition I was aiming to get one newspaper, three radios and five blogs to feature the cause, but I only got two radio interviews and a blog post for him. It turned out that all major free newspapers had the same main editor, thus, if he was not interested then it was a red light for the rest of the newspapers too. As a blog writer myself I know how picky the writers can be in choosing their topics. Although I would have thought that a local charity would have promoted the cause, but only few local media showing interest on the case is something that I could not find a reason for. In addition, we lost two features, one being an American music site and the other an environmentalism site, due to the video being late, which was devastating. On the other hand at least eleven non-local blogs and sites wrote about Platt

Fields, which surprised me very much. All of the articles were shared on Franco's Facebook and Twitter as an appreciation towards those who had written them.

I signed up for Google Alerts, which sent me an email every time something was published on the Internet with the key words "Franco and the Dreadnought Platt Fields". However, when I noticed that a blog post had been sent to my email a day later after its publishing, I started to doubt Google Alerts' trustworthiness and searched from the Internet with those key words myself. Through this I found several sites, which had featured the charity. On Twitter, I entered the same key words and found many people tweeting and talking about the cause. No need to say that this online monitoring brought Franco many useful contacts and new fans as he conversed with those people spreading the word of the charity.

Basically, the localization idea did not go as I had planned it, but once again the power of social media did the work for us as local people especially those who visit Platt Fields Park regularly, more than eagerly shared the video and the Bandcamp link urging people to help. With no doubt the campaign definitely helped Franco's establishment as an artist in Manchester.

Although, inevitably I started to question the true commitment of Franco's fans, but for example some of the donations being at highest £10 (lowest £2,5 and the average £5), it definitely proved that not all fans are the same, some being more giving and some not at all. However, a fan asking if the EP was available as a CD made me think whether a physical version would have generated more profit. It was too late for that already, and I thought that having it digital would save us time and be easier for people to purchase, since Franco still did not have a store on his official website. Next time I would definitely have the music on both digital and physical versions to give people more options on how to purchase it. Also, what might have hindered the campaign was Franco's Last Man Standing's official single release in November, which other parties promoted heavily on Twitter. It would have been useful to have all parties focusing on the same campaign at the same time to help reach the goals.

The Platt Fields EP  
by Franco & The Dreadnought

Platt Fields 00:00 / 03:12

**Digital Album**  
Immediate download of 4-track album in your choice of MP3 320, FLAC, or just about any other format you could possibly desire.  
**Buy Now £2.50 GBP** or more

- 1. Platt Fields 03:12
- 2. American Dream 03:39
- 3. This One's Mine 03:37
- 4. Platt Fields Live Acoustic 03:16

*This is a charity EP to raise awareness and funds for the volunteer community group, "Friends of Platt Fields". These guys do a great job of maintaining the park and running events within it. All proceeds will go directly to them.*

Please help in the best way you can and spread the word. Thank You.

[www.plattfields.org](http://www.plattfields.org)

Official video featuring some of the volunteers and fans.  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hy1u1Kxx1KA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hy1u1Kxx1KA)

Franco lives less than a five min walk from the park and has had many great times in there. the song is a tribute to what an awesome place it is. Big up Platt Fields Park!

[www.facebook.com/FrancoDreadnought](http://www.facebook.com/FrancoDreadnought)  
[twitter.com/FrancoDnought](https://twitter.com/FrancoDnought)  
[www.francoandthedreadnought.com](http://www.francoandthedreadnought.com)

released 15 October 2012  
written by Franco + The Dreadnought  
produced and recorded by The Animal Farm  
video by Sophie Hannell, Ben Rimmer and Andy Harrison

SoundCloud  
Facebook

shows

Nov 16  
[Sanctuary](#)  
Burnley, UK

discography

[The Platt Fields EP](#)  
Oct 2012

[International One - 3 track EP](#)  
Jan 2010

contact / help

For help with downloads, [click here](#).

For all other inquiries, [click here](#).

**FIGURE 10.** Screenshot of the Bandcamp site retrieved on October 31, 2012 from <http://francodreadnought.bandcamp.com/album/the-platt-fields-ep>